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Maricopa County Regional Trail System Plan Phase Two

- Cave Creek Recreation Area
- Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area
- McDowell Mountain Regional Park
- Usery Mountain Recreation Area
- San Tan Mountain Regional Park

Executive Summary

Vision

Our vision is to connect the majestic open spaces of the Maricopa County Regional Parks with a nonmotorized trail system.



Maricopa County Trail Commission
Maricopa County Department of Transportation
Flood Control District of Maricopa County
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation
Maricopa County Planning and Development



Maricopa County

Introduction

The Maricopa County Regional Trail System Plan: Phase Two is the second installment of the County's regional trail plan. Initiated by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) when it formed the County Trail Commission in February 2000, the plan seeks to develop a continuous nonmotorized, multi-modal, shared-use trail linking the County's magnificent regional park system.

Phase Two picks up where Phase One of the plan left off. Phase One, which the BOS approved and adopted in September 2002, served two purposes. The first was to create a template for the trail system as a whole. The second identified the initial trail segments. The Phase One plan contains background to the regional trail project, its goals and policies, and design guidelines. It identified trail corridors connecting White Tank Mountain Regional Park to Lake Pleasant Regional Park to Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Recreation Area. In addition to the primary loop route connecting parks, the regional trail system includes regional trail alignments that will link regional corridors around the Valley and will help to preserve open space in the community. The Trail Commission has named the primary loop route

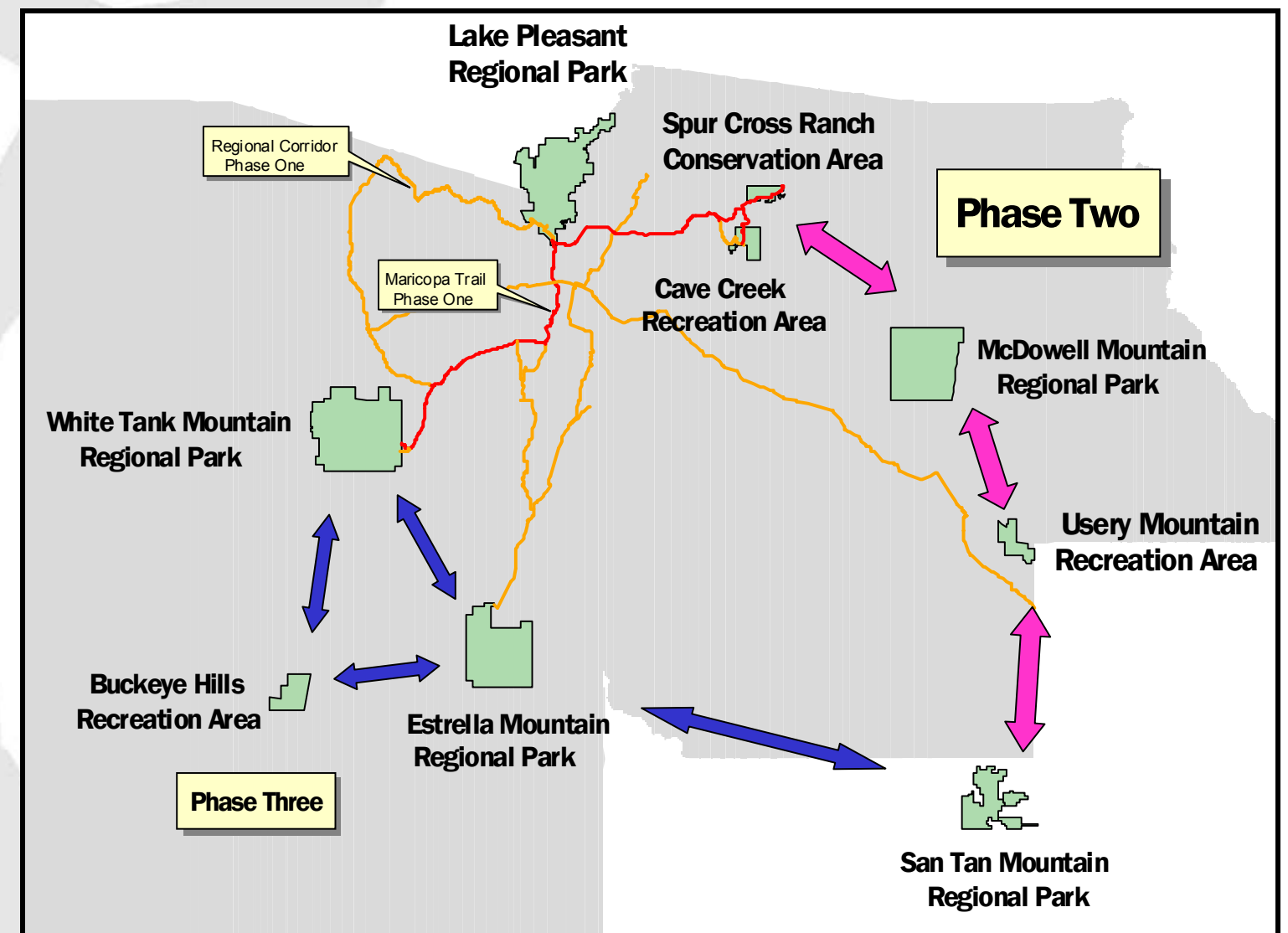
the Maricopa Trail.

Phase One ended at the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Recreation Area. Phase Two's objective is to find the best possible routes connecting Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Recreation Area to McDowell Mountain Regional Park to Utery Mountain Recreation Area to San Tan Mountain Regional Park. Unlike the plan's first phase, this portion of the trail plan relies almost entirely on trail alignments, either existing or planned, located within local communities and other jurisdictions. In order to identify Phase Two's segments the trail planning staff consulted extensively with representatives from communities and agencies on the Valley's eastside and in Pinal County. This portion of the plan also uses corridors such as the Central Arizona Project (CAP) already identified in Phase One, as well as property owned by the Flood Control District (FCDMC).

Phase Three of the regional trail plan will connect San Tan Mountain Regional Park to Estrella Mountain Regional Park to Buckeye Hills Recreation Area and back to White Tank Mountain Regional Park to complete the primary loop.

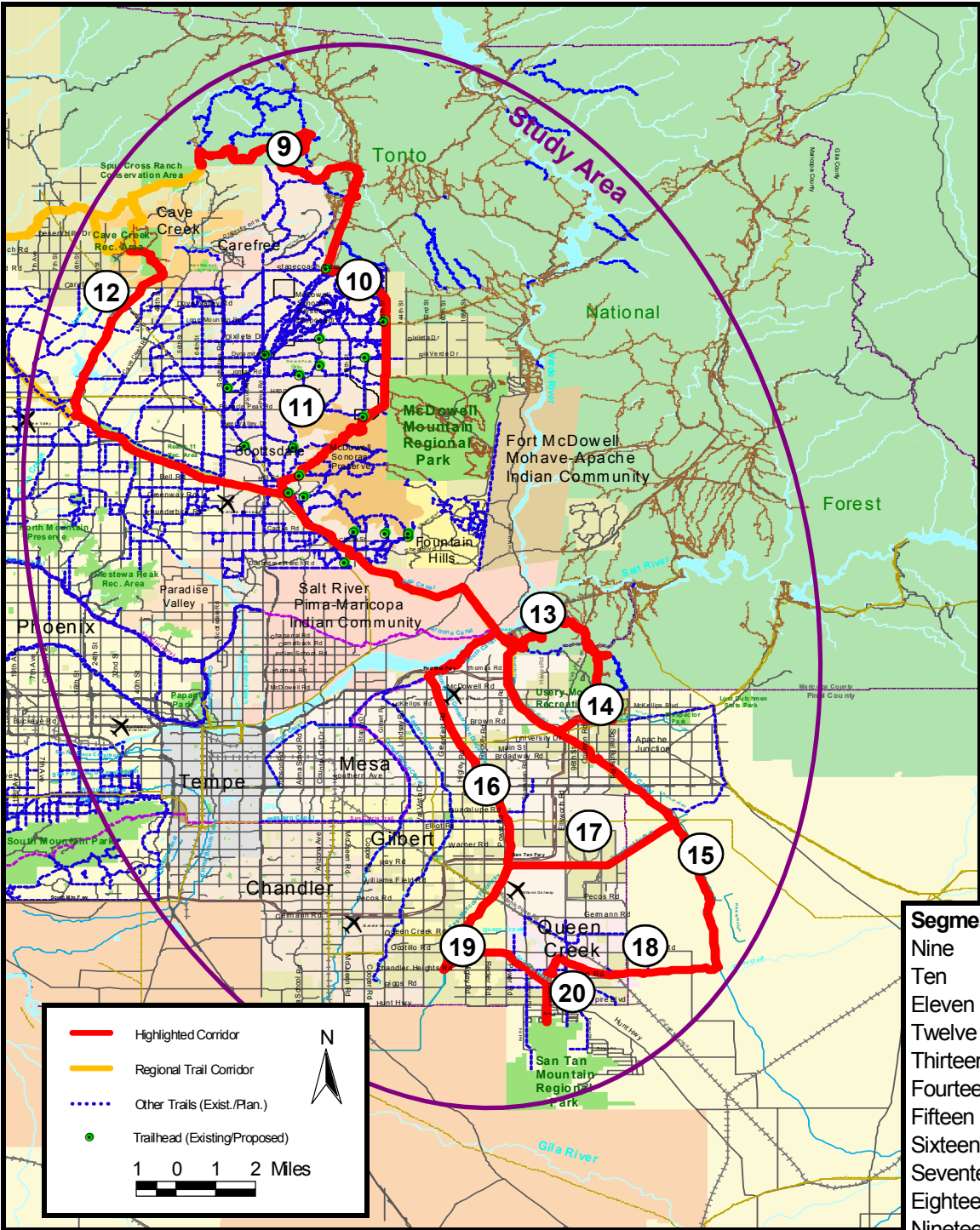


Phase Two Study Area: Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area to San Tan Mountain Regional Park



Study Area

Trail Alignments



Proposed Trail Alignments

The recommended trail alignments for Phase Two of the Maricopa County Regional Trail System are shown on the map to the left. The planning staff decided on these corridors after carefully analyzing all available data, including the information gathered from the trails plans of communities and agencies within the Phase Two study area. The exact and final placement of the trail will not be identified until the design phase of the project. Since Phase Two identifies no new county-owned trail corridors, each community's trail planning and building process will be responsible for the final and exact placement of that community's trails. The same is true for the placement of the trail inside County parks and on FCDMC property. Portions of the trails master plans for the communities involved in Phase Two are included in the appendices.

Other trail placements will be determined during negotiations with the agencies or individuals holding ownership or having control over specific properties. Descriptions of each segment, including aerial, ownership, natural features, and jurisdiction maps are included in the planning document. Photographs of each area are included to help explain the terrain and show some of the existing facilities along the route.

Phase Two adds 126 miles of new potential trails to the Regional Trail System. All of the second phase segments, 9-20, will be part of the Maricopa Trail. The

mileage for this portion of the trail doesn't include a segment of the CAP aqueduct corridor incorporated in Phase Two but already identified in Phase One. Adding that segment, which runs from Cave Creek Wash in Phoenix to Granite Reef Dam on the Salt River in Mesa, increases the length of corridors used in Phase Two to 154 miles. Trail alignments in both Phase One and Phase Two run along portions of the Sun Circle Trail. When the remaining parts of the Sun Circle Trail, those segments not used in either phase, are added to the regional trail system the length of regional trails in the County identified so far totals 440 miles.

The Maricopa Trail split into two routes near the end of Phase One in order to provide access to both the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Recreation Area. Instead of starting Phase Two from just one of these parks, which would leave the trail segment to the other park as a spur, the planning staff decided to extend the trail both north from Spur Cross Conservation Area and south from Cave Creek Recreation Area. The trail loop thus formed will allow trail users to travel to McDowell Mountain Regional Park directly from either of the parks. Similarly, a trail loop planned between Userly Mountain Recreation Area and San Tan Mountain Regional Park enables trail users to proceed from one park to the other without retracing any of their route.

Segment	Name	From	To	Miles
Nine	Trail 247	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	Stagecoach Pass	22
Ten	136th Street	Stagecoach Pass	McDowell Mountain Regional Park	10
Eleven	Windgate Pass/WestWorld	McDowell Mountain Regional Park	Central Arizona Project Aqueduct	9
Twelve	Cave Creek Wash/Union Hills	Cave Creek Recreation Area	Central Arizona Project Aqueduct	10
Thirteen	Userly Pass	Granite Reef Dam	Userly Mountain Recreation Area	10
Fourteen	Signal Butte Floodway	Userly Mountain Recreation Area	Central Arizona Project Aqueduct	3
Fifteen	Central Arizona Project	Eastern Maricopa County Border	Queen Creek Wash	12
Sixteen	RWDC/EMF	South Canal/Sun Circle Trail	Queen Creek Wash/Sanokai Wash	24
Seventeen	Powerline Floodway	CAP in Pinal County	RWDC/EMF	9
Eighteen	Queen Creek Wash	CAP in Pinal County	West of Ellsworth Road	8
Nineteen	Sanokai Wash	East Maricopa Floodway (EMF)	Hawes Road	6
Twenty	Hawes Road	Queen Creek Wash	San Tan Mountain Regional Park	4
Total Miles				126

Implementation Plan

Public Involvement

General Trail Implementation Guide

Action	Description	Timeline (5 years)	Status
Complete Trail Plan	Identify remaining corridors and carry out planning studies.	—	Completed second of three phases.
Adopt Segment	Trail Commission recommends to BOS to adopt corridor planning studies and preferred segments.	—	Phase Two completed.
Adopt Ordinances and Codes	Departments and agencies amend their policies and procedures to incorporate trails. BOS adopts ordinances and codes.	—	Ongoing as needed.
Designate Authority	Trail Commission recommends to BOS that Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department be the agency responsible for the trail program. This includes the ability to plan, design, build, operate, and maintain the trail system.	*	Completed.
Provide Resources	Trail Commission recommends to BOS staffing and funding needs.	—	Ongoing.
Adopt Prioritization Criteria	Select objective criteria to guide future design and construction.	—	Ongoing.
Prioritize Segments	Use prioritization criteria to select specific segments for right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction.	→	Segments from Phase One prioritized.
Establish Nonprofit	Trail Commission recommends to BOS that a not-for-profit organization be established to support the trail system.	—	Trail Director completing selection process for Trail Foundation Board of Directors.
Develop Segment Action Plans	Develop scopes of work, schedules, and budgets to accomplish prioritized segments. Allow flexibility for at-risk properties and opportunities as they arise.	→	Trail Director working on prioritized segments from Phase One.

Timeline Key: * Immediate — Time anticipated → Continues into the future

Regional Trail System Implementation Plan

As the vision for the regional trail system moved closer to becoming a reality during Phase Two, elements of the Implementation Plan continued to serve as a guide for the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (BOS), Maricopa County Trail Commission, and County departments. The Trail Implementation Guide on this page identifies the actions to be taken and an updated estimated time line for those actions. The chart also indicates what method will be used to complete the actions.

Phase Two saw significant process made on numerous actions identified in the implementation guide. Two trail planners were hired in November 2002 to complete the corridor studies. A Regional Trail Director was hired in December 2002 to begin work on a number of trail-related projects. Among the steps taken by the Trail Director in Phase Two were implementation of departmental policies intended to protect the regional trail, formation of a nonprofit foundation to support the regional trail, development of criteria to prioritize trail segments for acquisition and development, creation of an acquisition plan for Phase One, and development of a marketing strategy for the trail system.



Phase Two of the regional trail plan carried on the Trail Commission's commitment to involve the public in the development of the regional trail. Information on the trail was made available to the public online, in newspapers, on electronic media, and in person to groups and organizations through presentations and to the public as a whole at six open house meetings.

Updates on the progress of Phase Two, as well as notices for Trail Commission meetings and general trail program information were available on the internet at the primary site for the Maricopa County Regional Trail Program, <http://www.maricopa.gov/trail/>. A link to *Trail Developments*, the trail program newsletter, was added to the website during Phase Two. So too was a link to the Phase One plan, once it had been approved and adopted. The Phase One Plan CD, a digital version of this document, was made available to the public free of charge. Results from the web-based "Name the Trail Survey" helped in the choice of "Maricopa Trail" as the name for the trail's primary loop route. Additional information was

also still placed on the MCDOT Bicycle Program site at <http://www.mcdot.maricopa.gov/bicycle/bike.htm>.

Just as in Phase One, numerous articles about the regional trail plan were printed in Valley newspapers during the course of Phase Two. These articles helped generate interest in the overall concept of the regional plan while also informing the public about the progress of the planning effort. Every effort was made by project staff to meet with reporters in person or by telephone to facilitate interviews. Local newspapers were also used to advertise the public open house meetings. Held at various locations throughout the Phase Two study area, the public meetings were used to both inform County residents about the plan's progress and to solicit their input regarding trail program developments.